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Alci Gomezbofeto  
#

The Love=Letters of a Vagabond.

*' The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,  
Moves on ; nor all your Picty nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.'*

OMAR-I-KHAYYÁM.

*The Love-Letters  
of a  
Vagabond.*

BY  
EDWARD HERON-ALLEN.

' Ah, Love ! could you and I with Him conspire,  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then  
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire ?'

*Omar-i-Kháyám.*

LONDON:  
HENRY J. DRANE,  
SALISBURY HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE,  
FLEET STREET, E.C.

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MDCCCXCVI.

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By ELLA WHEELER.

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To You, in music, was my soul outpoured,  
When—years ago—I sang these songs, and now  
Wide oceans roll between me and your grave,  
But still your calm eyes, closed to contemplate  
Eternity, come sometimes, my Adored,  
And, looking into mine, have told me how  
Death could not rob me of the Love you gave.

870402

Pues la pena cruel que en mi se halla,  
Para contalla pide nuevos modos.

Mas yo milagro nunca, visto ! vivo  
Zeloso, ausente, desdenado y cierto  
De las sospechas que me tienen muerto,  
Y en el olvido en quien mi fuego avivo.

Diré que va acertado el que bien quiere  
Y que es mas libre el alma mas rendida  
A la de amor antigua tirania.

Diré que la enemiga siempre miã  
Hermosa el alma como el cuerpo tiene  
Y que su olvido de mi culpa nace,

Ofreceré á los vientos cuerpo y alma  
Sin lauro ó palma de futuros bienes.

Antes con risa en la ocasion funesta  
Descubre que el fin mio fué tú fiesta  
Mas gran simpleza es avisarte desto,  
Pues sé que esta tu gloria conocida,  
En que mi vida llegue al fin tan presto.

*Cancion de Grisóstomo.*



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## The Love-Letters of a Vagabond.



LIVES there the man, or has there ever lived,  
Since Cain betook him to the Land of Nod  
And took to wife a daughter—perhaps  
more—

Of that mysterious land that rests unknown  
To the geographer of later days,  
Who has not written love-letters? Perhaps  
Such man exists, or has existed,—nay,  
Possibly you who read these lines are such.  
If that be so, lay down this little book,  
My verses are not written for your eyes.  
Observe, I said 'the man' for though there be  
Some room for doubt among the sterner sex,

[Whereof some, more repulsive than the rest  
May ne'er have known the thing that men call love],  
Yet I maintain that our sweet sister-halves  
Must necessarily be wise upon  
The bitter pleasures and the mad-sweet pains  
Which 'tis their blessed province to evoke.  
Deal gently with me reader, for, methinks,  
It may perhaps be I am over-bold  
In thus unburdening—I almost said  
My heart, but now-a-days such things are not !—  
Unburdening my basket of the scraps  
Flung into it from time to time when love  
Has seemed to hover near me. Long ago  
Some sage laid down the well-worn axiom that  
The abstract is imposing, and therefore  
Its opposite, the concrete, is grotesque :  
This is my state of mind, I do protest ;  
The moods that made these verses I revere,  
The words wherein I wrote them I revile,  
And now that I am older, and perhaps  
A trifle wiser, I may safely say

'Twere better had I checked my wand'ring thoughts.  
With the philosophy of this first song.

*LOVE is not for me and you,*

*Let us be the best of friends!*

Dear !—your lips of cherry hue,

Hair of gold, and eyes of blue,

And your lovely cheek that any rose with envy rends !

Well I know should move

Love within mine empty heart,

And make it agony to part

From you ;

But alas ! on beauty and no more, love ne'er depends :

*So let us be the best of friends ;*

*But do not let us love !*

*Let us be the best of friends,*

*Love is not for me and you !*

Sweet !—your voice that croons to me

Scraps of old-time melody,

Sure in pleading for your sins of love might crave amends,

I.

A Burden of  
Friendship.

And successful prove,  
Sweeter than Luscinia's flute,  
Gaining pardon absolute

For you;

Yes !—I know 'tis so, and all my soul to you ascends :

*But let us be the best of friends.*

*And do not let us love !*

*Love is not for me and you,*

*Let us be the best of friends !*

Would you know the reason why ?

I will tell you.—Poets cry

That they must surely die when love begins and  
straightway ends !

I, the fancy wove

That I loved you, dear,—and yet—

Knowing you're a sad coquette,—

Yes !—*you.*

I will not give you for a toy, a love that all transcends :

*So let us be the best of friends ;*

*But do not let us love !*



---

POST-SCRIPTUM.

Love, with me, all else transcends.

Are you sure it's thus with you?

Do you *think* you *could* be true?

Really?

\*

\*

\*

*Well!—let's remain the best of friends,*

*And never let us love,*

*Really!*

But it is hard, perhaps impossible,  
To check young Cupid's flight ere yet his wings  
Have borne him o'er the gentle meadow-land  
That men call 'friendship,' though, indeed myself,  
I checked him once with lilt of this 'Ballade.'

THE Songsters aye among the things  
They most extol in roundelay,  
Have counted Love the first;—he sings  
The best who sings the last I say,

II.

A Ballade of  
Friendship.

So, Sweetheart, in some far-off day,  
Before our twin-life wanes and ends,  
Let men affirm of us that 'They  
Were nothing more than simply *friends*.'

Love's lord—young Cupid—gave it wings  
The wherewithal to fly away  
The moment that the stabs and stings  
Of Life should check its wild hey-day,  
When Love is neither glad nor gay  
Its gloom our fondest fancy rends !—  
Then let them think of us that 'They  
Were nothing more than simply *friends*.'

When I'm with You, your sweet voice rings  
Within my soul, and makes to-day  
The fairest day of fairest Springs,  
'Twere death to think, when we are grey,  
That e'er with Love we dared to *play*,  
With Love—that all *save* Love transcends !—  
Let someone tell his wife that 'They  
Were nothing more than simply *friends*.'

---

ENVOI.

Princess ! is my thought yours ? Ah, nay,  
Tell me not where your fancy trends ;—  
Let folk declare of us that ‘ They  
Were nothing more than simply *friends*.’

Still—and I doubt me if I can regret—  
Our wooing stayed not here, but grew apace,  
Though at the first it seemed we should be friends  
And nothing more. I well remember how  
We met, ‘ ’twas in a crowd ’ (the usual way !)  
And, though I strove to linger at her side,  
Our social duties parted us ere yet  
We had exchanged five commonplace remarks :  
Indeed, had it not been that chance once more  
Flung us together in the bowl of life,  
I ne’er had known her name, for, as so oft  
Will happen when two kindred souls have met,  
The eyes, the hair, the mouth, the smile remain  
Each in the other’s memory, but alas !  
Of that sweet name we strove in vain to hear,

No syllable has caught our waiting sense.

'Twas thus I suffered when I met my love

And made for her this little roundelay.

### III.

Another  
dance gone!

*n everyday  
occurrence.*

I MET you at a party—not so very long ago—

And, when I was presented, on my soul I didn't know

That ever I should touch your hand, or see your face  
again ;

But as I bowed before you,

I knew well that to adore you

Would be the kind of pleasure that one hardly knows  
from pain.

We spoke a few short sentences, conventional and  
weak,

[When people meet at parties it is but the lips that  
speak],

And what I said that afternoon was surely far from wise;

But I had hardly met you

Ere above the world I'd set you,

From simply list'ning to your voice and looking through  
your eyes.

The lady who presented me—though meaning to be  
kind—

Was surely so short-sighted as to be as good as blind,  
For she told you ‘all about me,’ to instruct you what  
to say;

But all her pains were wasted,  
For upon the spot we hasted  
To utter commonplaces on the things of ev’ry day.

And hardly had we got beyond the formal ‘How-  
de-do?’

When some well-meaning stranger introduced a man  
or two,

And you *had* to turn and talk to one, or seem to be  
uncivil;

But talking to the other,  
I felt much inclined to smother  
Him—them—all male creation,—which I wished was  
at the ‘divvil.’

Next moment we were parted by some other idiot-man,  
Who offered you a chair, some tea, a photo, or a fan

And I was taken off to entertain some other girl;  
    But as I rudely hurried  
    From her, fearing to be worried  
Into talking all the afternoon to her, 'twas in a whirl  
I hunted 'mid the dreary crowd of people that I'd 'met,'  
And tried—in vain—to find the face and eyes I can't  
    forget ;  
But you were *gone*—you know that I was not for that  
    to blame ;  
    And now my cause of sadness,  
    Which is sometimes almost madness,  
Is that, as I smiled and bowed at you, *I didn't catch*  
    *your name.*

## POST-SCRIPTUM.

And so you see how things go wrong ;  
    A word in a speech, a note in a song,  
Not clearly caught spoils everything ! We've but our-  
    selves to blame,  
But I *know* I should have loved you had I *only* caught  
    your name !

Had this been all, perhaps it had been well,  
But 'twas not thus. We met, and, day by day,  
Through the green fields,—more often through a  
crowd,

We wandered side by side, telling ourselves  
That we professed old cold-veined Plato's creed.  
We laughed at love, at lovers, and the loved,  
And told each other that such things are vain;  
We laughed to see the soft-furred forest things  
Pursue each other through the underwood;  
We laughed to see the yokel and his lass  
Touch hands by accident, as, side by side,  
They turned the creaking windlass at the well;  
We laughed to see how men and maidens meet  
To greet each other formally—and blush.  
Ah ! well, our self-delusion was most rare;  
Perhaps the days when we, contemning love,  
Did love most fondly, were the happiest  
We ever spent together. Who shall say  
What word unspoken, what half-risen flush,  
What stifled sigh, what chance-note in a song,

First rent the veil that we called comradry,  
To show the fire that blazed behind its folds ?  
Indeed, I know not when for the last time  
We went forth friends, and came back, just a thought  
More gravely courteous than we were before,  
A thought more mindful of the words we chose  
In talking to each other ; I forget  
When friendship died, and we began to love.  
'Twas then, I think, I fancied I had solved  
The problem of our newer consciousness,  
And told her that this thing was 'Sympathy.'

## IV.

Sympatly.

HUSH ! do not speak, lest the spell that enthralls us  
Burst, like the smouldering spark, into flame :  
Still !—make no sign, lest the soft voice that calls us  
Fill this whole planet, for me, with your name.

Absence is death—to be near you is madness,  
Madness or death, which of these will *you* choose ?  
Say, what is death to the anguish, the sadness  
Of finding a life which we find but to lose ?



And,—I am gone in a month!—'tis a second  
Compared to the cycles we've trodden in vain  
In search of each other, nor could we have reckoned  
E'en now on the chance that united us twain.

Hush ! if you speak you'll drag down to existence  
A Spirit that hovers our twin souls above,  
To make us its own with a tender persistence  
That wakes us at last but to say '*This is Love !*'

I knew it then, and yet I knew that I  
Was all unworthy of this priceless gift,  
For I had known five lustra in the world,  
And thought I knew it well. I seemed to see  
Our future anguish spread before us, well !  
I did my best, I think, to make her feel  
That I was not the lover of her dreams.  
That I was calm, dispassionate and cold,  
That mine was not the passion of a boy,  
That freezes, burns, despairs and hopes, and then  
Hopes and despairs, freezes and burns again.

And whilst I preached, I knew, as I know now,  
I was most young, and she—was but a child.  
And so, one day, when laughter had grown dull,  
And we had found ourselves in graver mood,  
She asked of me, as she was wont to ask,  
That I should make for her another song.  
This was her chiefest pleasure, were she sad,  
Or merry, she would come to me and say,  
'The songs that you have made for me are old,  
Make me another,' and I'd sit me down  
And scribble her these 'Love-letters.' This day  
She sat, resting her chin upon her hands,  
And watching me with great, grave, fearless eyes,  
Whilst I, aweary of love-madrigals,  
Made her these verses, '*To a Débutante.*'

V.

To a  
Débutante.

I SAW you stand smiling, as many another  
Has stood before now, in a soft blaze of light,  
Receiving your friends by the side of your mother,  
A beautiful thing all apparelled in white ;

And as you stood, looking so happy together,  
Behind you, the scroll of your gentle past furred,  
I couldn't help wondering curiously whether  
Would win in the struggle—your soul or the world?

I couldn't help casting a glance up the vista  
Of time, and endeav'ring, in vain, to surmise  
How the future will seem, when you taste, like your sister,  
The fruit of experience that makes one *so* wise !  
Do you think you'll be crushed 'neath the load of  
exactions

Men cast in your path your fair girlhood to prove?  
Do you think you'll find time 'mid your thousand  
distractions

To hallow a few happy moments with love?

Child ! when the trial in store for you dashes  
Your day-dream to fragments, shall *you* also pray,  
Like many before you, that out of the ashes  
Of joys that are past you may still think to-day  
Was a day whose remembrance will brighten the ages  
You'll pass ere another seems like it? . . .

. . . . . And yet  
It hardly seems fair on the first of the pages  
Of your Book of Lite to emblazon—Regret !

Meanwhile this fairest of all fairest maids  
Began to own the soft Empire of Love,  
And others [by whose side she was distraught,  
To whose light words she turned a heedless ear,  
Seeking with restless eyes my own that sought  
Hers in return], began to look askant  
Upon me, and to hate me as men do  
Their fellow when a woman smiles on him :  
’Twas then I writ for her this lighter ode.

VI.  
popularity.

AND so, I’m doomed to be abused  
By all who speak of me to you ?  
To tell the truth I’m getting used  
To hearing things—thank God ! untrue,—  
About myself, and as to be annoyed I have refused,  
They’re naturally angry that I only feel amused !

And after all I should expect  
To be abused by all that clan,  
That weak unnecessary sect,  
Entitled 'Unsuccessful Man ;'  
I think *you'd* guess the reason if you calmly would  
reflect,  
And *why* I'm so unpopular you'd readily detect.

They doubtless wonder grimly why  
*You* let me linger at your side,  
They strive amain to catch your eye,  
But find their striving simplified  
In sheer futility, and seek in vengeance to deride  
The man who, just to talk to you, their anger has defied.

That this should be the case, of course  
I feel a most profound regret,  
Theirs is the gain, and mine the loss !  
I have no doubt 'tis so,--and yet,  
I would not have it otherwise, preferring to be set  
Apart from all men since the day when you and I  
first met.

I would that none should criticise  
The least thing that you choose to do,  
For what is worthy in your eyes  
Is surely good, and pure, and true,  
And, if these social idiots carp at me, I will not rue  
Their folly, since it wins for me sweet sympathy from  
you.

So I shall ne'er regret that fate  
Has kept for me this doom in store,  
And if I earn man's feeble hate,  
I'll take it all, and toil for more,  
But if I'm crushed, you'll hearken to my prayer when I  
implore  
That you'll not close the sanctuary where I would adore.

I know not how it happened, but one day  
The mask of friendship fell, and, in its fall,  
Was shattered beyond possibility  
Of even the mere semblance of repair.  
What subtle something set our veins afire

The day our hands did meet, and, having met,  
Stayed clasped ; the day she gave me up her lips,  
Unmindful of the Life she gave to me  
In that long sudden kiss, but from that day  
Life seemed to me a new and bonny thing,  
Thenceforth she seemed a part of all I did  
Or thought. She seemed to take me by the hand  
And lead me gently to a newer life,  
To better, purer things, to intercede  
For me with God and men, and then I said,—

DARLING ! who out of the Eternal Past  
Hast come to me, twin-sister of my Soul,  
To Thee, for all the good that Thou hast done,  
To Thee, for all the Light that Thou hast wrought  
In my dark Life, in proud humility,  
And arrogance of Love, I come at last  
To lay before Thy feet the single Gem  
Of all my Life, my Love for Thee alone,  
To do withal as seemeth best to Thee.

VII  
My Inter-  
cessor.

Wilt Thou then bear it proudly to Thy God,  
Set in the fair, chaste Jewel of Thy Soul,  
Saying : 'This Gaud, this tiny glitt'ring thing  
'Lay hid for æons 'mid the drift and clays  
'Of one pure human Entity, all lost  
'Amid the earthy atoms wherewithal  
'They fashioned him, and none might see or know  
'How deep amid the dross "Humanity,"  
'Pure in itself, this Adamant lay hid.

'Then I, in all my pride of Purity,  
'Sought out and found the one thing 'mid the mass  
'Of Misery, that seem'd like unto me.  
'Like follows Like, and therefore when I came,  
'To search if aught of Good might be in him,  
'There rose and met my Soul—to crown its quest,  
'As comes the willing load-stone to the pole,—  
'The one thing, worthy of me, trustingly,  
'As—answering my call—his Love met mine.'

And then the loving Angels of the Lord,—  
If such there be,—scarce looking at the toy



That Thou dost wear so proudly on Thy front,  
And seeing naught of it for very love  
Of Thy sweet Self, shall up and answer Thee :  
‘ For Thy Soul’s sake, we do forget that e’er  
‘ Thy Jewel-trove seemed aught than what it is  
‘ As now Thou wear’st it, and for Thy same sake  
‘ It shall draw near with Thee and plead to God !’

Then will He answer make to Thy dear prayer :  
‘ Oh ! Thou, who hast deserved well of God  
‘ And men, for all the Good that Thou hast wrought  
‘ Among them, may’st approach, and coming in,  
‘ Take Thy high station nigh My very Self,  
‘ And, in the dazzling brilliancy wherein  
‘ Thou shroudest all things-evil that may come  
‘ Nigh unto Thee, shalt even find a place  
‘ For this poor Soul that Thou hast brought with Thee.

Darling ! it shall be thus when we are dead ;  
How much the more then, whilst we live, for if  
Thy Soul can plead successfully for mine  
In craving pardon at the Judgment-throne,

Shall Men bow down before Thy sweet Decree  
That I, in all my great Unworthiness,  
Have hid within myself a quality  
That Thou can'st judge to make me worthy Thee,  
From out the world of men that Thou hast known.

And if this quality be but my Love  
For Thy dear Self, e'en then 'tis surely one  
That makes me worthy the respect of men  
Here in their midst, as Then and There, where all  
Is like to Thee in Purity and Truth?  
And I, who nothing knew of this fair Gem  
Till Thou had'st found it in me, kneel to Thee,  
And pray that Thou in turn wilt pray for me,  
That, haply, even I may enter in.

Sweet!—when To-day is done, and in the joy  
Of fair To-morrow Thou art wholly mine,  
I pray Thee of Thy charity forget  
The clay whereout Thou pluck'st the Jewel Love,  
Lest peradventure, thinking of it all,

The Gem may seem less fair, and with the eyes  
Of Thy clairvoyant Soul, Thou'lt criticise  
The flaws in it, that are the weary years  
That sped 'ere Thou did'st take me by the hand.

Who e'er has loved knows well the halcyon hours  
Whereof our lives thenceforward were composed,  
Knows well the days of tender egotism  
We knew together, she and I. [Alas !  
'Tis passing drear to be looked back upon.]  
I fain would wander down that *Fleuve de tendre*,  
And note once more the landmarks of our love ;  
The day, the hour, the place, the when, the where,  
We first knew love, not friendship, thrilled our souls  
When her hand touched me or my own touched her ;  
The boulders cast athwart the track of time  
I half persuaded and half bore her o'er,  
The day she gave her sweet self up to me,  
And we were stricken with insanity  
More sweet than all the sense in all the world.  
The day she smiled, and looking in mine eyes,

The world ignoring, by the world ignored,  
Gave up her sweet self utterly. [Alas !  
'Tis passing drear to be looked back upon.]  
And how she said, begging as was her wont  
For some new song, 'Sweetheart, our songs are  
    old,  
'Make me a new one to commemorate  
'This day, this hour, this moment of our lives,  
'That makes us one for all eternity.  
'Your verses have been humble, you have prayed  
'To me for pity on the misery  
'That was as sweet for you as 'twas for me.  
'Those days are past, sing now our newer life,  
'Sing now your triumph and my slavery,  
'The days are past when at my feet you knelt.  
'And prayed to me as now I pray to you.  
'Chant now a pæan worthy of my love  
'For you, my king, my master, and my God !'  
And I, the words tear-dimmed before mine eyes  
My hand a-trembling for sheer ecstasy,  
Chanted the triumph of Love's afternoon.

MY Angel-love, my life is yours,  
And, being yours, is good at last,  
In high disdain my soul outpours  
The bitter mem'ries of the past,  
For nothing evil may remain  
For one who such a maid adores,  
And nothing now can part us twain,  
My Life is yours !—my Life is yours

Sweetheart ! my very soul is thine,  
My new heart beats alone for thee,  
All that seemed sad shines forth divine  
Since thou hast given thyself to me,  
And naught shall come between us, dear,  
We are but one, Sweet Mistress mine,  
Go proudly on ! nor ever fear,  
My Soul is thine !—my Soul is thine !

The world is full of pain and strife,  
But naught of it can come to us,  
Since I have given you my life,  
Our loving must be ever thus,

VIII.  
'Le Chant  
d'Amour  
Triomphant.  
—  
A Tumult

So ne'er let the soft mem'ry die  
Of all my soul of you implores :—  
There's none on earth more blest than I  
Since you are *mine*, and I am *yours* !

The days that followed then, how shall I dare  
To sing the calm delight of perfect trust,  
The exquisite unconsciousness of love ?  
Poets have sung the madness of love's morn  
And the drear burden of satiety ;  
'Tis mine to sing how sweet the moment when  
A fond familiarity has ris'n  
Between two souls that sought each other long,  
And found each other after empty years.  
So—she and I found solitude amid  
The crowd that surged around us in the sea  
Of life, and often, through long afternoons,  
We sat together in the winter-time,—  
She at her work, at some vain little thing  
That with her willing hands she toiled at—I  
Bent o'er my desk, surrounded by my books

And papers, whilst the winter storm without  
Mocked at our happiness, and mocked in vain.  
And ever and anon a chapter done,  
A song completed, or a volume closed,  
She'd nestle at my side, and whilst I played  
With the long silken tresses of her hair,  
She'd read what I had writ, and wisely frown  
In disapproval, so that I might prove  
That all was excellent, and claim reward  
For what I wrote upon her lips and eyes.  
'Twas then I made this song of her and me.

THEY say that the weather is bad—that the snow  
Lies thick on the ground, that the skies are grey,  
That the world is a-mourning for Summer,—I know  
That the Summer's noon closes the Winter's day;  
That out in the city the winds sob and moan,  
But what do I care if the world's all awry.  
For with *us* the sun shines as we sit here alone,  
When *She* is at work—and so am *I*!

IX.  
Sbc and J.

They say that the world—that's to say, people in it,—  
Are treach'rous and false when they seem to be  
fair,

That the praise of the mob, when you've striven to  
win it,

Is just like an iceberg—it's brilliant—and bare !  
That nothing is worth half the trouble we give it.  
That tears sound through when we're half mad with  
glee,

But I am content with my life—as I live it,  
When *I* am at work—and so is *She* !

They say that life isn't worth living—that sorrow  
Lies hid in our hearts when we laugh ; well—  
perhaps !

*We* care naught for this, and we don't want to borrow  
The joy of the world—we're content with our scraps  
And if you would know why I'm gay, notwithstanding  
The chills of the world, and it's people—just see  
That my darling and I have a sweet 'understanding,'  
When all the *world* works—and so do *we* !



The winter passed, and summer came again  
And then we wandered out as yester-year  
We wandered o'er the flower-jewelled fields,  
And I would lie, and pillowing my head  
Upon her dainty feet, would scribble lines  
Upon her tablets; and at eve when we  
Had sought once more our cottage near the sea,  
She'd sit and let her fingers stray at will  
Over the keys of an old harpsichord,  
That creaked and twanked most direly, but I think  
No melodies are half so sweet as those  
She would invent for such light songs as this.

I LIE at your feet in the dusk, and a scrap  
Of your lace falls and kisses my hair as you lean  
To listen, and loosen a fold of your wrap  
As I lie at your feet, Nadine,  
At your miniature feet, Nadine.

And so, when I look in your eyes, I believe  
I can read your soul's secrets, can guess what you  
mean,—

X.  
Nadine.  

---

A Serenade.

And hardly know whether to glory or grieve,  
As I look through your eyes, Nadine,  
Through your wonderful eyes, Nadine.

And then, as you lift a soft fold of your lace  
In your hand, bending forward, and hold it  
between  
My eyes and your own, you have hidden your face,  
With the lace and your hand, Nadine,  
With your beautiful hand, Nadine,

And so, I fall silent. You answer, and then  
Your voice takes me back to some heav'n I have  
seen  
Long ago, for *our* tongue becomes musical when  
Tis spoke of your lips, Nadine,  
Of your passionate lips, Nadine.

I'd chant you, but know that my hymn were so old  
Should I tell you how glorious you are, oh, my  
queen !

And the flame you have lit in my soul would turn cold  
Should it leap to your heart, Nadine,  
To your passionless heart, Nadine !

We parted once, but for a little while,  
When I was summoned by the needs of life  
To visit far from where she stayed alone,  
Passing her days in soft expectancy  
Of my return, and, lying in the grass  
That clothed the banks of a tumultuous stream.  
My thoughts flew back to her as they were bound  
To fly at ev'ry moment of the day,  
And ev'ry sound that fell upon mine ear,  
The shrilling of the cicada, the cries  
Of golden-crested orioles that sought  
Their mates amid the bushes that o'erhung  
The raging torrent,— nay the waterfall  
That murmured in the distance up the stream,  
Whispered her name to me, and lest she think  
That my new songs might be of aught but her,  
I made for her this little canzonet.

X  
the Banks  
of the  
Tawanna.

Song.

I AM alone, an hundred miles  
Of mountain-land part Thee and me,  
Yet all the champaign round me smiles,  
And speaks to me of Thee ;  
The woodland rings with joyous notes  
Of happy bird and hum of bee,  
And ev'ry song that hither floats  
Doth sing to me of Thee.

The careless stream that o'er the stones  
Hies fast to greet Thee by the sea,  
Holds countless tongues whose murm'ring tones  
Shall croon to Thee of me ;  
'The fire-flies wave their beacons bright  
Around me, and I seem to see  
'Thine eyes, and from their tiny light  
Shines love from Thee to me.

So, ev'ry creature round me seems  
Our messenger of Love to be,  
And ev'ry world-sound haunts my dreams  
To chant to me of Thee !

Alack ! although we twain did know it not,  
Our day was waning and the end drew nigh,  
The stifled summons from the world of men  
Fell with reiteration on mine ear,  
The things that should have parted us at first  
Took shadow-shapes and passed before our eyes,  
Shrouded as yet in dim futurity,  
Panoplied in the mists of the To-be ;  
The time came when we knew that we must  
part,  
Some day—perhaps—but ah ! not yet awhile.  
And yet we knew too well it must be so  
Sooner or later, though we steadfastly  
Forbore to think of the unhallowed dawn  
That was ordained to break upon the day  
When we should sever. Often when we sat  
Silently and alone, immersed in thought,  
And neither dared to read the other's mind.  
I would look up and catch her tear-dimmed  
eyes  
Fastened upon me with an agony

In ev'ry light that flashed in them for me.  
So, we began the task of severing  
The bonds that bound us, gently at the first ;  
We spoke of the long years that stretched before  
Our hearts, and I do well remember how  
Her red lips trembled when I gave to her  
One day these two sad songs, that seemed to tell  
Vaguely of our drear future loneliness.

## XII.

## Two Songs.

I. Heart=  
Silence.

SWEETHEART, when I have gone away  
Out of thy life, and left thee nought  
Save the soft mem'ry of a day  
When thou did'st half divine my thought,  
Wilt thou remember me, and say  
Within thine heart, ' Full well I know  
He loved me well,—he could not stay,  
He loved—but could not tell me so ?'  
  
Dear Love, when I seem dead to thee,  
And others strive to fill my place,  
I know thou wilt not let them see  
That half-told secret in thy face.

Wilt thou not whisper to thine heart  
    ‘He must have loved me well to go  
And live his lonely life apart,  
    He loved—but dared not tell me so?’  
When all that parts us is o’erthrown,  
    And thou at last art wholly free,  
Thy heart will not have ceased to own  
    The love it knew—and gave to me,  
And we’ll forget in high disdain  
    The years that passed so sorely slow,  
We’ll meet and ne’er shall part again,  
    I’ll love you,—and I’ll tell you so !

AH ! when again men say to you  
    ‘I love but thee,’ will you forget  
The day we parted, how the dew  
    Of mem’ry made your eyes grow wet ?  
And how I kissed away your tears,  
    And how I swore that I’d be true  
Till death, and how I soothed your fears  
    In promising to live for you ?

XIII.  
II. At Parting

When other men shall come to you,  
    And lay their hearts at your dear feet,  
Will you forget how fast they flew,  
    Those hours we were together, Sweet?  
And how within mine own your hands  
    Lay unresisting, for you knew  
That though I fled to other lands  
    I left my heart and soul with you?

You'll not forget how sweetly you  
    Gave up your lips, and made the pain  
Of parting naught, and swore anew  
    That you and I should meet again,  
When nothing stands between us, dear,  
    And when the dream an ev'ning slew  
Is ours once more,—you'll know no fear  
    When I can live—and die—for you.

She came one day to where I spent alone  
The empty hours that she might not fill  
With her sweet presence, and that day we spoke



As calmly as we could of coming days  
When life for us must be all desolate.  
In vain we tried to soothe each other's fears,  
In vain we spoke of the impending age  
As but a little while, whereafter we  
Should meet again, and revel as of yore  
In thoughtless happiness, and should forget  
Our days of separation. Ah ! 'twas mad  
To wring our souls before those days had come !  
Vainly we sought oblivion as of old  
In one another's arms, in vain we strove  
To drown all recollection in a kiss—  
The cruel truth uprose in mockery,  
And told us it was folly to forget,  
Or even to pretend that we forgot  
That this was the beginning of the end.  
I only know that in that afternoon  
The mad flame of our love flared up as ne'er  
It seemed to blaze before, and, when she left,  
I knew not all the 'reason' in the world  
Could e'er restore to us what we had lost,

And were about to lose. The atmosphere  
Seemed subtly scented of her presence still :—  
Then suddenly I made these lines for her.

## XIV.

Memory :  
or a Visit.

A PERFUMED delirium hangs in the air  
As I sit here alone and the firelight dies,  
And you stand here again with your exquisite hair,  
With your passionate lips, and your pleading eyes.  
It was here that you sat—if I stretch out my hand  
I can almost believe that I touch you again,  
Like the hunger-mad sailor who springs for the land  
That he sees in his madness—and springs but in vain.  
Do mad people *know* they are mad—do you think ?  
And do the dead *know* they are dead ? tell me this ;  
I care not ! for I should be willing to sink  
Into madness or death 'neath the spell of your kiss.  
You're here once again—leaning back in this chair,  
And I am content to crouch here, at your knee,  
In the flesh you are distant, but what do I care  
That your body is there, since your *soul* is with me.

I hold you still closer—your breath on my cheek  
Drives the blood through my veins like a torrent of  
flame,  
Whilst *I* dare not breathe,—if my soul could but speak  
The Echoes Eternal would answer *your* name.

And now? It is morning—you're still in my grasp  
As I shut close my door, and I put out my light,  
And I lie here. Alone? Do you think I unclasp  
My arms from your neck?—do I bid you 'Good-night?'  
Ah, no !

The day before I left, I sought her home,  
Though she had told me she must be away,  
And waited for her vainly for a while.  
Alas ! she came not, but where she had been  
Each tiny object spoke to me of her,  
And there for the first time since first we met  
I realised the pain of solitude ;  
And, as I lay amid the Indian stuffs  
That strewed the cushions of a great divan,

The sorrow of it all came home to me,  
And this was, in some way, my *Réverie* !

## XV.

A *Réverie*.

WITH all the chill of Friendship in mine eyes,  
With all the fire of Longing in my soul,  
I lie alone—for you are gone—and watch  
The cinders, busy in their idleness,  
Writhe into wreaths and stumble into shapes,  
To fall once more and leave no trace behind  
Of the weird fancies of the dying fire,  
Its last confession, as it were, before  
It crumbles into dry, decadent dust !

Who was the sage who, in rough days of old,  
When flight of time was marked alone by lust  
Of life and near approach of frightful death,  
Said that, of all things dangerous and bad,  
The worst was when a woman thought alone ?  
He spoke in wanton ignorance, for man,  
Left solitary with his own drear thoughts,

Is worse a thousandfold, for he blasphemes  
Himself and all things, thinking on his past!

I lie and listen to the dying voice  
Of dying day, 'mid the great city's din,  
Hushed incoherent 'neath the folds of night;  
I lie amid-the cushions and the silks  
Of your divan, and wonder whether it  
Would tell of things more strange, could it but speak,  
Than all these memories which start from naught,  
Thrown on the screen of thought in bold relief,  
Cast by the magic-lantern of the Brain!

Wild thoughts of Days that had not any Night,  
Of tingling joys in Life that knew not Death,  
Of hours of Pleasure when no thought of Pain  
Crept in to make the Pleasure dear to us;  
Of captive hours, chained in the bond of eyes  
That shone for us alone, and bade us drown,  
Of such conceits as 'Time' or 'Space,' all thought,  
When we lay drugged in lethargy of Love,  
And fancied our unconsciousness was Peace!

I lie, contrasting with such halcyon hours  
The wretched ones when those that we have loved  
Seemed cold, or disappointment chilled the fire  
Of longing in our hearts, and bade despair,  
Distrust and Disenchantment take its place;  
The moments when our hearts have beaten high  
With wild expectancy of joys supreme;  
And how those moments died, extinct in dull,  
Cold misery, when Nothingness ensued.

Ah, well! why mock the solitary hours  
With thoughts like these? Rise up and contem-  
plate  
The Present, and its dazzling brilliancy  
That shines into our eyes, and bids us cease  
To think at all of Future things—or Past!  
The Now is good: take heed lest you by calm  
Dispassionate reflection 'neath the rose,  
See the sharp thorn of Disillusionment,  
As, through a murky glass, the astronomer  
Sees spots upon the Sun!

The Winter waned, and with the first Spring days  
I hied me wearily across the sea,  
Seeking new fortunes in the newer land,  
Changing all things around me save my love.  
*That* remained steadfast, built upon the rock  
Of Hope that stands eternal in the waste  
Of Life, although I strove in vain to lull  
The anguished longing that oppressed my soul.  
I thought that time might bring a lighter mood,  
That I perchance might live to see the day  
When I could sit me down and live alone  
With no heart-burning thoughts of yester-year.  
Perhaps I might have been to some extent  
Successful in the search for new delights  
To drown the mem'ry of the old, alas !  
There came a little song across the sea,  
An old friend sang it one soft afternoon,  
And as he sang, the wild throb of my heart  
Cried out aloud of her whom I had left ;  
I looked, half blinded, at the printed sheet,  
And saw the song was hers. That night my hand,

Refusing me the task I set it to,  
Traced, half-unconsciously, this answering.

## XVI.

Awakening!

THERE came a Voice across the sea,

It came to me—it came to me !

And ah ! a weary tale it told

Of nights long past, and days of old,

Before the sea relentless rolled

'Twixt you and me !

Its Song was sad, but bravely true,

It came from you—it came from you !

To find me in the hasting West,

To tell me how you sought for rest

In vain. Alas ! old things were best

'Twixt me and you !

In future, never to us twain

Shall come again—shall come again !

The joys we knew long years ago.



Our souls are dead ; alas ! we know  
That never more shall love-songs go  
Betwixt us twain !

I sent it her, half fearful for the meed  
Of my temerity, for I had sworn  
To fade from out her life, die utterly  
For her, but she, repenting her decree,  
Read my poor heart-cry with forgiving eyes,  
And so, when weeks had passed, one sunny morn.  
A little withered flower came to me,  
And that was all :—but surely 'twas enough,  
It told me that my Love, my old Love lived !

MY old Love lives !—will live for me for aye,  
They told me she was dead,—they spake not true,  
Such love as hers and mine can never die,  
At each day's death it lives for me anew.

These know not love—but I will cherish through  
Eternal ages her sweet trust, and I

XVII.  
'My Old Love  
lives !'  
—  
*Rondeau  
Redoublé.*

Ne'er will love more as they would have me do,  
 My old Love lives !—will live for me for aye.

They tell me that I mourn her idly. Why !  
 They even say that I am mad to rue  
 Our parting. 'Twas, in sooth, a sorry lie  
 They told me,—she was dead: they spake not true !

Can love be born to revel for a few  
 Short months, then, take the tribute of a sigh,  
 And flee elsewhere for newer joys to sue?  
 Such love as hers and mine can never *die*.

They think for me the world has gone awry,  
 Since I have learned this song they can't construe,  
 Our love is mine !—and night and morn I cry :—  
 'At each day's death it lives for me anew !'

Sweetheart !—it is *not* dead this love of ours,  
 The new love that they offer me is vain,  
 Through the long years and months of days and hours  
 I shall be thine,—thou mine,—I bear no pain,  
 My old Love lives !

Meṭhinks it was some wanton Spirit-thing  
That prompted her to breathe upon the love  
That lay a-dying in my lonely soul,  
And fan its fading embers into flame.  
Long days and weeks and months crept by, and she  
Never made sign again that still she lived—  
That still she thought of those bright vanished days,  
When we knew naught of parting or of pain.  
As days of waiting gathered into years,  
My quickened joy died out, and sorrow lived  
Once more within my soul ; and then men came  
Across the ocean and declared that she  
Had proven faithless to our oft-pledged vows,  
That she and I were twain indeed for aye.  
I think 'twas then I realised that life  
Was empty now for Love,—my Love,—was dead.

THIS is not Life, since Love—my Love—is dead,  
Since half a world holds our twin-souls apart,  
Our love that made life, Life, took wing and fled,  
And so, for aye a-widowed, mourns my heart.

XVIII.  
This is not  
Life!  
—  
*Rondeau  
quasi-redoublé*

The world may wane, but she will ne'er forgive,  
Shall I forget the bitter words she said ?  
Ah no !—indeed, I know not how I live,  
This is not Life, since love—my Love—is dead.

They say 'tis brave to battle to be free !—  
That God is good. I know He bade us part  
From one another :—what is life to me  
Since half a world holds our twin souls apart ?

We were but one, and this but yester-year ;  
My life was hers, and hers was mine (she said),  
And now—I am alone—'tis passing drear ;  
Our love that made life, Life, took wing and fled.

The race of youth for fame and fortune seems  
A bonny thing, with love to speed the start,  
But at the goal these things are but as dreams,  
And so, for aye a-widowed, mourns my heart.

'Tis but a phrase, this glory of the day,  
And but a curse this thing they call the Breath

Of Life, since love is lost, and, dared I pray,  
I'd crave of God the grace of night and death :

*This is not Life !*

The songs I made then fell in minor keys,  
A subtle misery invaded me  
And spoke in every word I said, in all  
I did. I ceased the endeavour to forget,  
I ceased to strive to wake a love long dead,  
Long dead in hers, but living in my heart  
As it must live for aye, but well I knew  
That nevermore would life hold joy for me.

AH ! nevermore will you and I together,  
My fair lost Love, walk hand in hand again,  
Nor tell our secrets to the soft spring weather  
As once we did, ne'er recking of the pain  
That now is ours, by some unhallowed law  
That bids our torn hearts cry, 'Ah, nevermore !'  
Ah ! nevermore the bond that naught may sever  
Shall e'er be sworn and sealed upon your eyes,

XIX.

Ab, Never-  
more !'

*A Song in a  
minor key.*

Life's winter-storm has wrecked our love for ever,  
And now we know how soon, alas ! it dies  
Out of our lives, this love of ours, to soar  
Beyond our grasp, to wail, 'Ah, nevermore !'

Ah ! nevermore shall we wlio, for a season,  
Had all in all of one another's love  
Love thus again, and ne'er may learn the reason  
Wherefore we failed who passionately strove  
To be but one in Life, and aye forbore  
To dream our souls might sob, 'Ah, nevermore !'

And yet I felt that had she but replied  
By word or sign to my love-agony,  
I had more lightly borne my punishment.  
My joy fell from her lips, and had my pain  
Been but inflicted by a word of hers,  
It had not seemed so drear to me [Alas !  
'Tis passing drear to be looked back upon !]

XX.  
After.

I FELT, long ago, that my day-dream was past,  
But I know'twould have softened the sting of my pain

Had you told me *yourself* that I'd wakened at last,  
Had I heard your sweet voice only once, once again.

'Twas your cold cruel silence that taught me despair,  
When no sob echoed mine as I whispered your name,  
Your answer, unspoken, was cruel to bear,  
And I left you in silence,—ah ! was I to blame ?

And now it's all over, I know 'tis too late,  
And I know when we meet that 'twill be but to part,  
But grant me one sign, for this pain 'twill abate  
If it come from *your* lips, from *your* hand, from *your*  
heart.

If you will but say that your heart is still true,  
Ever silent perhaps, yet—in silence the same,  
If my soul turns in answering silence to you,  
And I love you as dearly,—ah ! am I to blame ?

And now new trials were in store for me,  
I almost had forgotten the old pain  
'Mid the new scenes wherein I passed my life  
Beyond a sheet of music that she wrote,

Or a few verses copied by her hand,  
A crumpled ribbon, or a faded flower,  
That she had worn, that sometimes, when I sought  
For other things within my treasure-chest,  
I found, there naught remained to speak to me  
Of her, and of her love, and of my loss.  
But one night, passing up a crowded stair  
At a reception, suddenly I came  
Full face to face with her. I did not know  
That she had crossed the sea, I hardly knew  
Whether she lived,—or had forgotten me,—  
But there she stood, a radiant lovely thing,  
Answering with a laugh the vapid tale  
That in her ear some social idiot poured.  
A sudden flush, and then she paler grew  
Than she had been before, and as I bowed  
And stammered forth some social commonplace,  
She held me out the hand, I trembling took,  
To find it icy-cold beneath her glove.  
We met and parted thus, but afterwards  
We met repeatedly amid the whirl



Men call 'society ;' ah ! it was hard  
To wear the mask of mere acquaintanceship  
For her who had been, as 'twere yesterday,  
My very life, my only constant thought,  
And then I made for her another song.  
She never saw it,—it was better so.

IF I am absent when we meet,  
And hardly find a word to say  
Or talk of nothings as we greet,  
Of trivial things of ev'ry day,  
You mustn't think me altered, dear,  
In these short months, alas ! you know  
That it was only yester-year  
I loved you so !—I loved you so !  
If, when I meet you 'mid the crowd,  
I merely bow and coldly pass,  
You mustn't think that I've grown proud,  
Or have forgotten, for, alas !  
Though I have tried in vain to fill  
My days as seasons come and go,

XXI.  
*I love You so*  
*A Song.*

Deep in my heart I feel that still

I love you so !—I love you so !

Perhaps when we are growing old,

Maybe when we're a trifle grey,

Our meetings need not be so cold

As they, alas ! must be to-day,

And in that summer-time we'll not

Remember there was ever snow,

When you'll have learnt *I* ne'er forgot,

I'll love you so !—I'll love you so !

It seems to me as I sit here to-day

And give my thoughts full rein to wander back

[Indeed, why should I not, now she is dead?],

It had been better had I gone abroad,

And not allowed mine eyes to see her more.

For she was changed in some mysterious way ;

She was no longer her whom I had known

So well—[so well !]—beneath the distant skies.

She had grown harder, colder, though her eyes

Lit up sometimes, as formerly, with gleams

That I had known so well—[so well !]—of yore.  
They told me she was shortly to be wed  
[For she was free and mistress of her fate  
Once more, but her new life was not for me];  
And yet sometimes a pressure of her hand,  
A word unspoken, or a thought not said  
Seemed to encourage me in the belief  
That she remembered. But, alas ! I knew  
That I was not more favoured than the rest—  
The men who danced and flirted with her when  
They met in crowded rooms—where men lie best !  
And presently I learned the bitter truth  
That she, grown harder in the world of lies,  
Was nothing more than—a most fair coquette !

THE ball-room for me had been lit by your eyes,  
That were brighter, I swear, than the gay chandeliers ;  
The walls had re-echoed the follies and lies  
We fancy we mean as we laugh down our tears.  
The night had grown old, and the birds in the park  
Just over the way were awaking to song,

XXII.  
Coquett

As, dazed by your beauty, I stood in the dark

In the hall, where I'd waited to see you so long.

At last, when you came to the top of the stair

On the arm of the man that they say you're to wed,  
I fancied the sheen of your exquisite hair

Was an aureole circling your beautiful head.

And, hidden, I gazed at you, trying to find

On your bosom the rose that *for me* you had worn,  
And saw that the man who was walking behind

You was wearing it *now*,—well,—you thought I had  
*gone!*

And you didn't see me. I left you and never

Shall tell you the torture I suffered that night,  
For, leaving, I knew that I'd left you forever,

And thank'd God you hadn't seen *me*, for the light :  
Had you known I was there,—had you guessed at the  
sorrow

That lay o'er my soul, you'd have wept for my pain,  
You'd have told me to come and 'make up' on the  
morrow.

\*

\*

\*

Had I kissed you once more I'd have loved you again!

'Twas then my heart grew cold at last for her,  
'Twas then I knew that had she come to me  
And held me up her lips, as long ago,  
I had not loved her in the old sweet way,  
And stunned by the discovery, I wrote  
These lines that I have christened 'Questioning.'

XXIII.  
Questioning.

YOU ask me, 'Do I love you?'—well, maybe  
I do, but then you know my life is full  
Of other things of more import than this :  
So many weighty matters come to dull  
The keen edge of my longing for your kiss,  
That oft-times, when I take you in mine arms,  
And feel your pulses throb for me alone,  
And know that all of you is all mine own,  
My soul is filled with eerie questioning  
Lest your heart wander blindly after mine  
Amid a labyrinth of rebel thought.

\* \* \*

And then I wonder vaguely if I ought  
To take from you an off'ring so divine

As this, that at my feet  
You lay—my Sweet !

So—love, for me and her, was dead at last,  
Was dead as well it might be, for, indeed,  
It lingered long in both our hearts I know,—  
Longer than light love lasts for most of us.  
I knew that all was over, and I knew  
That love could never come to us again,  
And live as once it did within our hearts,  
For, who has loved as we twain loved can ne'er  
Love more so perfectly as once we did ;  
New summer in our hearts could never be  
One half so lovely as those '*neiges d'antan*.'

#### XXIV.

#### Retrospection.

*'Mais—ou sont  
les neiges  
d'antan ?'*

SIGHING, she rose, and o'er her shapely head  
Stretching her long white arms to the empty air,  
She leaned against the window. She was fair  
As any old-time goddess to whom men  
Bowed low the knee in Argolis.

She said :

'All this, I know, is sweet and true—but then—

‘Alas ! ’tis all so old to me, and when  
‘Men say they love me, one who, long ago,  
‘Swore that he loved, then left me, comes again  
‘Before mine eyes, and smiles in high disdain  
‘To see them strive to wake a love long dead.  
‘Tell me no more ! I cannot bear the pain  
‘Of living it once more, dear friend, and so,  
‘Tell me of things more exquisite than this;  
‘Of loyal friendship—love that claims no kiss  
‘Of passion to belie its gentle name.  
‘Ask nothing more ! nor seek my love ; you know  
‘All that has died within me.’

Then, in low,  
Impassioned whisper, did I strive to break  
The cold frost-mantle, and for her dear sake  
I vowed abandonment of all that life  
Held dear for me. But presently the strife  
I saw was ended—wasted ; so, in dull,  
Cold misery I turned. And ’mid the lull,  
The silence of our souls, she softly said :  
‘Leave me to mourn alone. I am afraid !

‘For love to me may ne’er be aught but shame,  
‘And now the only memory that may  
‘Bring joy to me is his—of yesterday !’

The last remains,—the last oft-acted scene  
We play upon the stage of life and love,  
When life has lost its flavour, and when love  
Has turned to calm indifference, to sink  
Still lower, or perhaps it were more true,  
To say to rise—from apathy to hate ;  
And I who only lived to chant her praise  
In verses that for me were writ in blood,  
Sat down one winter’s midnight, mad with pain  
And tuned my old worn lute to Blasphemy !

XXV.  
Hatred !

*I HATE YOU!* aye, as deeply as I loved you, and you  
know

How deep the love I bore you was a little while ago,  
When round my neck you wound your arms, and  
looked into mine eyes,  
And vowed you loved me in return, and all your vows  
were *lies*;



And now I hate to look at you—and will not ! Well,  
you know,

I never should have hated, had I never loved you so.

Your low-tuned voice still rings within mine ears : you  
swore to be

For all eternity the loving thing you were to me.

A few short weeks of absence—to forget me you began!

The weeks became a month or two—you'd found  
another man !

And I? Did you suppose I'd plead, or beg you not to go?

Ah no ! I'd sooner hate you than *descend* to love you so.

I see you pass my window as you tread my lonely street,

A smile upon your face as forth you go, your fool to meet,

Whilst the man they call your 'husband' works his  
weary life away

To provide you with the money for your lover's whims  
to pay.

If *he* knew all he'd kill you—but alas ! he'll never know,

For the lying tongue I hate in you has made him love  
you so.

Fame ! wealth ! to see you shamed I'd gladly sacrifice  
the whole ;

To see you humbled to the dust I'd give my very  
soul !

Just Heav'n ! what joy to see you crouch for mercy !—  
'twould be odd

To see *you* craving pardon for your sins from man and  
God !

And God and man would spurn you,—cast you out,—  
could they but know

Your true self, for they'd hate you,—and I'd love to  
see you so !

The time will come—I pray for it !—when your pol-  
luted name

Will ne'er be whispered by the pure in heart, for very  
shame,

When honest folk will shun you, when you'll seek a  
home in vain !

*Then* shall my triumph be—and then—I'll love you  
once again,

For you'll be shriven for the wrong you did me, and  
you'll know

I never should have hated, had I never loved  
you so !

*The End of the Love-Letters.*

---

These are some trifles that I writ for her  
Ere yet we parted first, in years gone by,  
Trifles that in our lighter moods I made  
For her to laugh at,—just to make her part  
Her rich red lips upon her snowy teeth.  
How blithely she would scold me, for she said  
[And tried to make me think she meant it too!],  
That this was not all fooling, that she knew  
That deep within my wand'ring heart I felt  
That what I wrote in merry ridicule  
Was more than half the truth, to see me frown,  
And stop her rebel lips with kisses. Well !

It may be that she was not wholly wrong,  
But I have kept these follies, for they seemed  
Part of the old sweet life when we were one.

This first I wrote one winter afternoon  
When she sat pouting and declared that I  
Sang her old songs, and swore old oaths that oft  
I'd sworn before to other, earlier loves.

XXVI.  
Erotic  
Chestnuts.  
—  
*A Protest.*

YOU tell me all men say the same  
Mendacious things when they adore,  
If so, you ought to lay the blame  
On all the men who've loved before !  
For surely you've no right to scold  
*Me* when I say that '*Only you*  
*Have understood me*'—if it's old,  
It need not therefore be untrue.

And when I say that '*I unbend*  
*Alone for you and am myself,*'  
You need not cease to be my friend  
Because 'twas said by some poor elf

Who doubtless *also* said what I

Say now to you, that :—‘ *Any day  
I’d gladly lay me down and die  
If you should find me in your way !*’

And possibly e’en *you’ve* denied

The truth of statements such as this :—  
‘ *I’m only happy by your side,*  
And ‘ *Loving you is simply bliss.*’  
’Tis possible these *have* been said  
By men flirtatious, bad and bold,  
But oh ! I *trust* you’ll not be led  
To doubt them *now* because they’re *old*.

P.S.

Now listen to me, and henceforward be wise,  
‘ *I never have loved any woman but you,*’  
Was remarked by *Père* Adam in *Paradise*  
Since when—as a statement—*it’s been untrue.*

Here is the utt’rance of a Yule-tide wish  
That she would have me make one Christmas dawn  
[It seems as ’twere a life-time since it broke].

It was soon after I had made the rhymes  
That are above, just after she had said  
That I had sung her songs at second hand!  
And I remember how she came to me,  
And wound her snowy arms about my neck  
Whilst I sat writing. Out of doors the snow  
Fell thickly on the people hurrying  
To Church to hail their Lord's nativity;  
A chill wind drove it, and the very dogs  
That used to gambol in the desert roads  
Seemed frozen, but with us a warm fire blazed,  
And she, enwrapped in wondrous woof of silks,  
Had huddled at my knee, whilst I sat lost  
In some abstruse reflection. So she rose,  
And laying her soft lips against mine ear,  
'You have not told me how, this Christmas morn,  
'You love me differently to other days,'  
She said, and then, laughing into mine eyes,  
She laid a sheet before me, and said 'Write!  
'Make me an ode to celebrate the day,'  
And so sank softly to my knee once more.

XXVII.

'On Christmas  
Day, for you.'

FROM all the forms wherewith they greet,

I'd choose for you the best—but nay!

How can mere *words* be good, my Sweet,

Enough for you on Christmas Day?

Alack! for mercy I must sue,

I cannot find a word to say

Sufficiently expressive to

Be sent to you on Christmas Day!

'*A Merry Christmas*' is so old,

There's surely some far better way

By which my heart-wish may be told,

For you to read on Christmas Day.

'*The Season's Compliments*,' I fear,

Is neither witty, grave, nor gay,

And I'd be loth to send you, dear,

A pointless song on Christmas Day!

I know not in what kind of voice

You'd have me tell my wish. You pay

Your money and you take your choice

In things like this on Christmas Day.

But I'll not bore you further, dear,  
With argument, but merely say :—  
'I've loved you, Darling, through the year,  
'I'll love you more this Christmas Day!'

'Twas in the later days, when life became  
For me a dreary thing in solitude,  
An old companion of my wilder years  
Became enamoured of a gentle maid  
Whom he so loved that they must fain be wed.  
His marriage parted us, and I declared  
That this was surely not a holy bond  
That tears us from our friends. We met one day,  
And somewhat in such wise I twitted him.  
He answered that I was all-ignorant  
Of that of which I spoke. To prove me wrong  
He bade me come, as oftentimes before,  
He bade me visit him in his new home,  
And finally, persuaded 'gainst my will  
(For I was aye Bohemian at heart),  
I went. His wife was sweetly, strangely fair.



She made me welcome to their little home,  
And then and there we supped right merrily,  
And afterwards, when round the fire we drew  
Our easy-chairs, he, she, and I, and talked.  
He said to me, 'Bohemian that you are,  
'You have neglected us most sorely. Why!  
'I have looked daily for a song from you,  
'Have sought a new Epithalamion.'  
And so, joking, we passed it by, but late  
That night, when my tired eyes refused to close,  
I gat me to my desk and wrote him these.

So !—you are married ; and it seems  
You've found a world of happy dreams  
Where fancy unrestricted plays,  
Whilst I my lonely lot deplore,  
For I—am still a bachelor,  
Old friend of my Bohemian days.

I dined with you to-night and saw  
How, in obedience to the law

XXVIII.

From a  
Bachelor to His  
Married 'Pal.'

—  
*An Epitha-  
lamion.*

Of love, your life contented stays  
 It's riot o'er the dunes of time,  
 And how your ending is sublime,  
     Old friend of my Bohemian days.

But what a change 'twixt now and then,  
 You're now the most sedate of men,  
     Your fancy now no longer strays  
 Among the joys of our old life  
 Since you have ta'en yourself a wife,  
     Old friend of my Bohemian days.

And after all I must confess  
 You're to be envied—more or less,  
     For 'independence' hardly pays  
 The bill when through Life's game we've run,  
 I fain would do as you have done,  
     Old friend of my Bohemian days.

There's no more loneliness, old man,  
 For you, since your new life began,

I wonder why one so delays  
The finding of that 'other half'  
(Don't think I dare at you to laugh,  
Old friend of my Bohemian days).

Indeed I know your new-found joys  
Excel the old ones with 'the boys';—  
Bohemianism's but a craze  
One soon gets over,—and I own  
'Tis solemn to live thus alone,  
Old friend of my Bohemian days.

'Tis poor enough this life of ours,  
The sweets lag far behind the sours,  
And while we chant our roundelays  
There's something singularly sad  
In our delights when we're most mad,  
Old friend of my Bohemian days.

Your wife is sweetly, strangely fair,  
Her grave eyes and her gold-grey hair,  
And ev'ry word she softly says

Tell me a bachelor's a fool  
(I'm not reflective, as a rule,  
Old friend of my Bohemian days).

You know that, don't you? but, my boy,  
The sight of your pure new-found joy  
My preconceived idea slays,  
And I, who faith and love deride,  
Just feel an outcast by *your* side  
Old friend of my Bohemian days.

The solitary months dragged slowly by,  
And finally I turned me to my books,  
And sought their sweet true friendship as of old  
Before I met my love. Ah! they were true  
To him who cherished them; they ne'er refused  
To comfort me when I was sorely tried,  
And one day sitting 'mid a dingy pile  
Of dusty, tattered volumes, I attuned  
My lyre to sing of them, more worthy far  
Than most of the vain fancies I had sung.

XXIX.

A Ballad  
Second-hand  
Books.

THEY sing of the shadow-lands far away,  
The meads and the valleys of Acadie;  
Of haunts where the satyr and wood-nymph play,  
Of Pillars and Gates of Ivorie;  
But none of these pleasaunces seem to me  
A haven of joy—for I'm growing old,  
And crave of Dame Fortune that I may be  
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.

I've haunted Brentano and John Delay,  
And toyed with their stories of France so free;  
At Putnams' and Scribners' from day to day  
I've flirted with Saltus, and Roe (E. P.);  
But weary of all I have turned in glee  
To Bouton's murk shelves with their wealth untold,  
Yearning for Quaritch in Piccadilly,  
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.

My pulses beat high and my heart is gay  
At finding a date that begins, M.D.—,  
On a sweet old 12mo whose leaves are grey  
With booky 'patina' of ancientrie,

And I kneel to the sage come o'er the sea  
That vandals may sell him for Yankee gold,  
And gladly I part with my hard-earned V,  
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.

## ENVOI.

Ah, Princess ! these glories shall live when we  
Are dead, and our life-blood has long run cold ;  
For *they* are immortal—as you may see  
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold !

Again one day I tuned me to extol  
A cherished haunt of our Bohemian days,  
A little merry inn where artist-boys  
Gathered each night to dine and to discuss  
The doings of their day. They craved of me  
A Ballade to commemorate our feasts  
Where fellowship made up for lack of wit ;  
And sometimes, even now, when I, alone  
Within the sacred precincts of my clubs,  
Dine solemnly in state, I do regret  
The days of Jauss's on Sixth Avenue.

FRIEND Fritz ! Thine hostelry is passing rare,  
Its externs genii, and its interns wags,  
Thy customers are, many of them, fair,  
Within thy portals humour never lags ;  
There, 'neath the Yankee and Bohemian flags,  
The stars and stripes, and red and white, we'd 'tick'  
Our meals when 'bust,' but oft-times 'neath those  
rags,

I could not catch the eye of Dominic.\*

Oh ! perfect henchman ! were you well aware  
How, when alone, or dining with 'her jags'  
(Were she brunette, or had she golden hair,  
Were she an angel, or the kind that nags),  
We were *your* slaves, and the financial tags  
You handed us in manner deftly 'slick'  
I added dimes to—*then*, most 'cute of 'fags,  
I could *not* catch the eye of Dominic.

At Jauss's if a stranger rudely stare,  
Or if there lack decorum in his 'gags,'

---

\* An amazing polyglot waiter of Transatlantic fame.

He's put outside at once, and should he dare  
 To come again, we scorn his money-bags,  
 He can't get *served*, and forth he soon 'stravags,'  
 For Fritz admits no man that's not a 'brick,'  
 And should *I* give offence to Jauss's 'stags,'  
*I* could not catch the eye of Dominic !

ENVOI.

Ah Fritz ! the careless writers for the 'mags'  
 And 'dailies' never found your soups too thick.  
 I'll ne'er forget how, in the bygone 'dags' \*  
 I could not catch the eye of Dominic !

Among the junior members of our band  
 I bear in mind a soft-eyed little maid,  
 Whose lot in life was to make melody.  
 To-day she is an artist of repute,  
 But then she was almost unknown, and played  
 For insufficient wage in concert-halls.  
 One ev'ning I had gone to hear her play

---

\* Norse for 'days' for exigency of classic form.



Before an audience of the better sort,  
That night the corner-stone of her great fame  
Was laid securely, and as I sat still  
And watched the rapt attentive auditors,  
This little prophecy occurred to me :—

CHILD, when to-night, alone upon the stage,  
With tiny hands you woke the fev'rish chords  
In subtle harmonies weft to assuage  
Passion, pain, longing beyond cure of words  
When [ev'n as Orpheus in the old time played,  
Staying great rivers that entrancéd seemed]  
You wielded the deft bow, my life was stayed  
And *I* entrancéd, listening, sat and dreamed.

I see you aye, as now, child-like and fair,  
Swathed in the clouds of music that you made,  
Whilst soft lights, streaming from your sunny hair,  
Showed where your dimples lurked in subtle shade :  
And the soft cadence of the theme you breathed  
Had all but made my wearied soul forget,

XXXI.  
To a Child  
(Virtuosa.  
—  
*A Concert-  
Fancy.*

Raising sweet living memories that wreathed  
 With garlands new the altars of Regret.

I see you when some other stronger hand  
 Imprisons that which lately sped the bow  
 [And this ere yet the running of life's sand  
 Has marked a decade with its silent flow],  
 And then—when bow and crowd are laid aside,  
 And children's hands wake fresh these echoes bright—  
 Will you remember your life's morning-tide?  
 Will memory bear you back, dear, to to-night?

Child, thus I dreamed, when suddenly I woke,  
 Roused by the thunders of applause which broke  
 From all who heard you. Ah! in the To-be,  
 Will praise delight you ev'n as now, *m'amie*?

One day a member of our *côterie*  
 —He was a gay, hard-working journalist—  
 Came down, his eyes ablaze with merriment,  
 To tell us of a conquest he had sought  
 In vain. He told who in his boarding-house

There dwelt an aphrodite of the shops,  
One of those stately, shapely nether-queens  
That stand behind a counter all the day  
To minister to idle women's whims.  
He told us how she was so wondrous fair  
That all the 'boarders' of the sterner sex  
Cast timid eyes and languorous looks on her,  
Whilst all the women disapproved of her,  
As women will when one of their own sex  
Is all too fair to win respect of them ;  
He told us how she, conscious of her pow'r,  
Kept all men most severely at arm's length,  
Reserving, doubtless, her more gentle moods  
For some well-favoured youth who, presently,  
Would make her his, and taking her away  
From her employ, would take a little shop  
And set up somewhere on their own account.  
His rhapsody was so grandiloquent  
That I, to pass an idle hour away,  
Scribbled the praises of his commerce-queen  
In these four cantos, which I gave to him.

## XXXII.

The Fascinat-  
ing Boarder.

IN the miserable boarding-house, where, morning,  
noon and night,

I hide myself and scribble as my publisher com-  
mands,

There burns no fire in my grate, I've hardly any  
light

By which to make the 'copy' that my editor  
demands,

The only sunbeam shining in the darkness comes at  
meals,

Where now and then I see you ; I don't even know  
your name—

Your lovely face nor gentle birth nor cleverness  
reveals,

You're commonplace and vulgar, but I love you all  
the same !

You never look at me, in vain I strive to catch your  
eye,

Your ever arctic coldness puts me in a fearful  
state,

As you dally with th' atrocity that's known to us as  
    'pie,'

And keep your eyelids lowered till I long to be your  
    plate ;

I fain would tell you of the love you cannot, will not,  
    see,

And take you far from here [where mutton mas-  
    querades as game]

To somewhere where your food the fare of gods should  
    ever be,

Where, commonplace and vulgar, I should love you  
    just the same !

Your hair, like golden ashes, shines, a halo round your  
    head,

To see it fall unbound I'd gladly sacrifice my  
    life,

I'd never seem to notice when you fidget with your  
    bread,

Or let your spoon and fork lie, both neglected, for  
    your knife ;

Nay! if you put your elbows on the table, or talk  
loud,

Or giggle at your own remarks, I'll swear you're not  
to blame,

If only you'd observe that I *exist* I'd be so  
proud,

For, commonplace and vulgar, oh! I love you all  
the same!

Your eyes are exquisite, but, ah! their glance ne'er  
answers mine,

Your lips, twin coral rays of crimson ecstasy  
supreme,

The flush upon your cheek -- ['tis all your own]—is just  
divine,

And all of you is faire than the goddess of a  
dream;

And though your voice is rough and coarse, I'd sooner  
hear *you* speak

Than hear th' Eternal Echoes ring with poems to  
my fame

Ah ! *won't* you deign to *look* at me ? and never count  
me weak,

If, commonplace and vulgar, I still love you *just* the  
same !

And so my solitary days crept by,  
Too slow, it seemed to me, and yet o'er-fast.  
Full many an hour I spent in vague regrets,  
Full many a day in vain imaginings,  
I could not tell you what I thought about,  
Nor what I did, nor what I wrote, indeed  
I sometimes think I hardly thought at all ;  
But after many months had wandered by  
In hopeless search for kind forgetfulness,  
I turned at last to the more serious work  
That makes a man's life what he wills of it.  
I woke from the old sullen lethargy,  
To realise that life was slipping by.

COME ! fill we full our arms with flowers,  
And cherish them : (they cannot last !)

Their little lives are spanned by hours,  
 It goes so fast, this Spring of ours,  
                     It goes so fast !

Let us give thanks to th' unseen Powers  
For joys to come, for pleasures past,  
For Youth's delight, for love-sweet hours,  
It goes so fast, this Youth of ours,  
It goes so fast !

Let us kneel low to God, who showers  
 Upon us these His gifts, nor cast  
 One longing glance on vanished hours,  
 It goes so fast, this Life of ours,  
 It goes so fast !

These were the days when I laid down my pen  
And tore away the strings of my old lute ;  
No more like Persian Jami 'stringing pearls,'  
No more to scribble idle fantasies,



Until the day when, accidentally,  
I heard that she whom I had loved—was dead.  
I sought her then once more, and by her side,  
Looking once more upon her frail young form,  
I did forget that she was young and fair,  
I did forget that she was young and false,  
I only knew that she was young—and dead !  
I kissed the cold lips and the grave-closed eyes,  
I touched once more the tiny hands and feet,  
Then turning—I went out into the world.

WELL, well, old doggie? You wag your tail, and if  
you could only talk,  
You'd say with your tongue what you say with your  
eyes—that you want to go out for a walk.  
You know not (how could you?) the hand that you loved,  
that you warmed with your soft, moist breath  
Will never caress you as once it did,—for it's quiet and  
cold in death.

XXXIV.  
To his Dog  
In Memoriam

You can't make out why I don't talk back, as you  
climb up on to my bed,  
And don't stretch out my hand to stroke you, and  
scratch your woolly head.  
There's a world of sympathy, dog-like and mute, that  
shines from your purple eyes,  
But you don't understand (how could you, doggie?)  
that anyone ever dies.

You'll want for a time to go to her house (you could  
find your way alone),  
And wag your tail and whinny to her, and ask her to  
give you a bone ;  
But that's all over, those days will never come back  
for you and for me,  
Those days that we spent all together, boy, in the  
summer-time by the sea.

*You* surely remember those days, old dog, how she  
scolded you when you leapt  
To greet her each morn with your muddy feet, from  
her door-mat where you slept ?

How she lay in her hammock with you underneath,  
never lonely and knew no fear

When I was away, for you guarded her well, and let  
not a soul come near.

But you and I have the memory, boy, of the love that  
to us she gave,

And we shall prize it more dearly now that they've  
laid her in the grave ;

*You* didn't see her, but *I* did, doggie, she lay so  
marvellous fair,

With lilies strewn on her hands and feet, and framing  
her gold-brown hair ;

You didn't see when she went away, oh ! so far away,  
and alack !

She's gone where perhaps we may follow her, doggie,  
but she—will never come back.

**Finis.**





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